IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus including ~~a mini-environment portion having~~ a chamber ~~therein that is pressurized to a pressure higher than that of the exterior thereof and used~~ for ~~transferring~~ processing a wafer ~~between~~ stored in a clean box having a lid to close the clean box in an inside of the chamber in a mini-environmental condition in which the inside of the chamber is pressurized to a pressure higher than a pressure of an outside of the chamber, ~~and housing the wafer and the chamber,~~ said apparatus comprising:

a first opening ~~portion which is~~ formed on a part of a wall ~~comprising~~ of the chamber ~~to be in communication with the chamber, facing to an opening of the clean box so as to allow loading and unloading the~~ for transferring a wafer between [[the]] a clean box and the ~~mini-environment portion~~ chamber through said opening; and

a door ~~that closes, when the transfer of the wafer is not performed, the first opening portion and opens, when the transfer of the wafer is performed,~~ which opens the clean box and said opening with taking the lid off, or inserts the lid through said opening to close the clean box with the lid and close said opening, and

a first gap formed between the wall of the chamber and an outer peripheral of said door and the lid while said door opens or closes said opening,

wherein ~~a gas flow path from the chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion~~ said first gap is formed such that a flow rate of gas flowing from the chamber from an inside of the chamber to ~~the exterior of the mini-environment portion~~ an outside of the chamber through said first gap ~~in a case that the wafer transferring operation is not performed and the door closes the first opening portion becomes~~ is substantially equal to a flow rate of gas flowing out from ~~a space~~ a second gap formed [[from]] between the clean box and an

outer surface of the wall of the chamber ~~and the clean box, through a gap between a surface of clean box facing the wall on which the first opening is formed and the wall, in case that the wafer transferring operation is performed~~.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~the gas flow path of the gas flowing out from the space formed from the chamber and the clean box in case that the wafer transferring operation is performed includes a space formed around the opening of the clean box, and~~ a dimension of said first gap and an inside pressure of the chamber are defined such that the gas does not flow into an ~~inner space~~ inside of the clean box through said first gap.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~the gas flow path of the gas flowing out from the chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion in case that the wafer transferring operation is not performed includes an aperture formed when the door closes the first opening portion~~ when said door is closed, said first gap is maintained in gas fluidical communication with an inside and an outside of the chamber.

Claims 4-12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus ~~including a mini-environment portion forming a pressurized chamber therein, said apparatus~~ according to claim 1, further comprising:

~~a first opening formed on a part of a wall of the pressurized chamber formed by the mini-environment, the first opening being configured to face an opening of a clean box so as~~

~~to allow loading and unloading of a wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion;~~

~~a door configured to open and close the first opening; and~~

one or more gas flow paths formed at least at a vicinity of edges of [[the]] said door, wherein said first gap is in gas fluidical communication with said one or more gas flow paths, and

wherein a flow rate of a gas flowing through the gas flow path is substantially equal to a flow rate of the gas flowing from the ~~pressurized~~ inside of the chamber to the ~~exterior~~ outside of the ~~mini-environment portion~~ chamber through [[the]] said opening when the door is opened.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein ~~the one or more gas flow paths include elongated flow paths provided substantially~~ the first gap is uniformly ~~around~~ formed along a side of an outer peripheral shape of the door.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the door is in substantially the shape of a square.

Claim 16 (New): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the first gap is uniformly formed along a side of an outer peripheral shape of the lid when the lid is inserted through said opening.